

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration in view of the previous amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6-14, 16-24, 27-30, 32-40, 43, 55, 58-60, 63, 64, 69 and 70 are pending. By this Amendment, claim 25 is canceled and claims 1, 28, 55 and 70 are amended.

Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to acknowledge Applicants' claim for priority. A copy of the priority document was received in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on April 7, 2006.

The Examiner objects to the drawings. The claims are amended to remove the recitation of a load transfer structure. Withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claim 25 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. As discussed above the load transfer structure is deleted from the claims.

Withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2, 6-14, 16-25, 27-30, 32-40, 43, 55, 58-60, 63, 64, 69 and 70 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. The claims are amended to remove a recitation of the load transfer structure. In paragraph 5 of the Office Action, the Examiner alleges that there must be some other structure which prevents the chains from sliding along the saddles. As described in paragraphs [0044] and [0045] of Applicants' specification, there is a transfer of the loads from the suspending means to the vessel structure. The ordinarily skilled artisan reading the description of the saddles would understand that the saddles provide this function. If

the suspending means was allowed free movement the saddles would not provide the load transfer structure as claimed in Applicants' independent claim 1. Thus, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 4, 7, 8, 9-14, 16, 19-25, 28-30, 32, 35-40, 43, 55, 58-60, 63, 64, 69 and 70 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,655,312 to Pollack in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,263,641 to Stimson. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants' independent claim 1 is directed to a vessel, a first stabilizer assembly and a second stabilizer assembly. Each stabilizer assembly includes at least a first submersible at least partially hollow body including at least one closed ballast tank of adjustable ballast. A suspending means suspends each body below the vessel such that the body is fully submerged below the water line of the vessel and above the seabed and is movable vertically relative to the seabed. One or more saddles are attached to a hull of the vessel and support the suspending means and transfer loads from the suspending means to the vessel. The first and second stabilizer assemblies are suspended from substantially opposite respective sides of the vehicle. A top of the suspending means of the first stabilizer assembly is connected to a top of the suspending means of the second stabilizer assembly by a connection which is structurally separate from the vessel.

The Examiner recognizes that Pollack does not disclose ballast tanks as in Applicants' independent claim 1. Applicants also respectfully assert that Pollack does not disclose first and second stabilizer assemblies suspended from substantially opposite respective sides of the vessel in combination with the other

claimed features of Applicants' independent claim 1. In an exemplary embodiment of Applicants' specification, the at least partially hollow bodies are suspended above the seabed and are movable vertically relative to the seabed. In Pollack, an anchoring system reduces the motion of the anchored vessel. The anchors are for example pile, drag or suction anchors connected to the seabed. See col. 2, lines 9-10. The anchoring systems works by anchoring lines being tensioned against each other in such a way that manipulating the anchoring lines may cause the orientation of the vessel to change. Thus, the system relies on the anchors being fixed to the seabed. If they were suspended, as in Applicants' independent claim 1, it would not be possible to operate the system as intended. The anchor lines which are located across the vessel, for example, anchor lines 11 and 12, are movably connected with the fairleads 18, 19, 20, 21. The fairleads do not act as load transfer structures and therefore do not correspond to the saddles of Applicants' independent claim 1.

The Stimson patent does not overcome the deficiencies of Pollack, noted above. Stimson discloses an anchoring arrangement so that the combination of Stimson and Pollack would simply replace the anchors disclosed in Pollack with the anchors disclosed in Stimson. There is no teaching in Stimson that the anchor should be suspended.

Applicants' independent claims 28, 55, 58 and 59 are allowable for reasons similar to those discussed above with respect to independent claim 1.

The dependent claims are allowable for at least the reasons discussed above as well as for the individual features they recite.

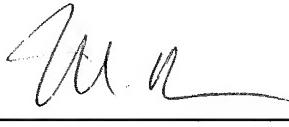
Early and favorable action with respect to this application is respectfully requested.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

BUCHANAN INGERSOLL & ROONEY PC

Date: January 13, 2010

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